

HARASSMENT AND ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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Aim

Harassment and Bullying of any kind are serious issues which can affect people's health, work performances, promotion, job prospects and learning and achievement. The Opportunity Group is committed to eliminating all forms of intimidation, harassment or bullying, wherever they are identified.

This applies to harassment and bullying on the grounds of gender, race, ethnic origin, disability, age, nationality, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, belief, marital status, social or any other characteristic

This policy is therefore intended to provide a framework, which will assist in the prevention of harassment and bullying and to ensure compliance with all "Safeguarding" protocols and provide guidance as to what action should be taken if such incidences occur.

Implementation

All employees, associates, agency contractors, temporary employees, learners, and subcontractors have a responsibility to recognise harassment and bullying and take appropriate action in accordance with this policy immediately, as soon as they become aware of any such behaviour.

Definition of bullying

One definition of a bully is a person who hurts, persecutes or intimidates someone in a weaker position.

The Opportunity Group defines workplace bullying as:

- Any unwanted or unwelcome behaviour towards an employee or groups of employees which offends, insults or undermines them;
- Repeated attacks on personal or professional work which are usually unfair and without warning or good reason;
- An abuse of power that can cause such stress that people lose their confidence;
- Inappropriate use of all information technology; forwarding of images, film etc. which may result in offending, embarrassing any individual or group.

Summary of the Code of Conduct

The Opportunity Group expects all of its employees, associates, temporary employees, learners, and clients to:

- Treat each other with respect;
- Work with colleagues to achieve goals;
- Maintain high standards of work and behaviour;
- Promote and demonstrate The Opportunity Group's values and adhere to relevant organisational policies seek help if for any reason they are unable to make their proper contribution.

Scope

This policy and procedure applies to all employees of The Opportunity Group we will have responsibility for ensuring that any incidents of

harassment or bullying are dealt in line with all safeguarding policies and procedures.

Line Managers will have overall day to day responsibility for ensuring that harassment and bullying are not practiced at The Opportunity Group.

What is bullying?

You may feel you are being singled out for unfair treatment by any individual or group. Although there is no comprehensive list of bullying behaviour and there is no one type of person who is likely to be a bully, the list below should give an idea of some behaviour that constitutes workplace bullying.

- Competent people being constantly criticised, having responsibilities removed and being given trivial tasks to do;
- Shouting at people;
- Picking on people. either in front of others or in private;
- Blocking promotion;
- Regularly and deliberately ignoring or excluding individuals from any/all activities and setting a person up to fail by overloading them with work or setting impossible deadlines;
- Consistently attacking an individual in terms of their professional or personal standing regularly making the same person or group the butt of jokes;

Leadership and Management Team Responsibility Managing performance

Leadership & Management team. clients or learners have the right and the responsibility to manage the performance of all those people working to them. The Opportunity Group expects them to fulfil this responsibility vigorously but in ways that do not constitute harassment or bullying.

Guidance notes

Targets for performance should be set and the success of individuals and teams in achieving them should be monitored.

None of this is at odds with The Opportunity Group's intention to create a positive and supportive working environment for its employees. clients. learners and other users of its services provided that it is done openly, fairly and humanely. One of the keys to this is that; while the Leadership & Management team may properly criticise performance it is not part of their role to criticise or abuse the person. whose performance is causing them concern.

Directors and Managers are individually responsible for seeing that harassment and bullying are not practised at The Opportunity Group. If an employee, coach. client. learner or user of our services alleges to their Director/Manager. or Designated Safeguarding Lead that someone in their area of responsibility is harassing or bullying others then it is the Director or Manager's duty to investigate with support from the appropriate Designated person or HR Manager.

He or she should approach those who have allegedly been bullied, tell

them of the allegation (without saying who made it - for further guidance please refer to The Opportunity Group's "Whistle Blowing" Policy) and reporting procedures and ask if any of them have either been bullied themselves or have witnessed bullying. If anyone says "yes" then the Manager is responsible for resolving the situation. in the ways described in the other parts of this policy document. and for seeing that the harassment or bullying ceases.

The Managing Director/Line Manager is also required to monitor the situation and to use whatever powers are necessary to remedy it. at this point The OpportunityGroup disciplinary procedure.

The responsibilities of people who witness bullying or its effects each one of us has a responsibility for the climate and the culture of the organisation we work in. By accepting this responsibility, we take an active part in creating its future: by not accepting it we take no less active a part. If we as individuals allow a bully to go unchallenged then we are actively supporting a culture in which bullying is acceptable. The Opportunity Group therefore expects its employees to report all instances of bullying that they become aware of. either because they witness it or because they see its effects on a colleague.

Some judgement will need to be exercised in the way that bullying is reported. In many cases the best person that the witness should speak to is the bully, pointing out their behaviour and its unacceptable nature. On other occasions it will be better to report the matter to someone who has a management responsibility for the alleged bully. Sometimes it may be best to seek advice from the HR Manager or appropriate Manager/designated person.

Both of these require fact-finding and although The Opportunity Group will aim to conduct this promptly it may still take some time. During this time both the person making the allegation and the person against whom it is made are likely to need support and are entitled to it. The principles of natural justice apply and there is a presumption of innocence until guilt is proved. This does not mean that an alleged bully will not be suspended while the fact-finding takes place - that may be necessary, or it may not. as individual circumstances will vary from case to case. If this is the case. it will be necessary to follow The Opportunity Group's agreed disciplinary procedure and compliance with safeguarding reporting procedures.

You may approach any of the following:

- The Managing Director
- Member(s) of the Leadership and Management team
- Your Line Manager
- "Safeguarding" Designated lead
- The HR Manager
- A colleague

Procedure for dealing with incidents of harassment and bullying

- Staff informed of such behaviour should first listen to the

individual concerned and make such enquiries necessary to clarify exactly what has been happening.

- The individual should be assured that they have acted correctly by reporting this in line with relevant policies and procedures (for example Safeguarding or Whistle-blowing) to someone who may assist.
- The staff member should attempt to give advice and support to individual about how to deal with the bully, in accordance with this policy document. but should also state that they shall seek advice from other sources.
- The staff member should make a written summary of events and complete a complaint form to bring this information to the attention of the safeguarding appointed person or HR manager who may look for outside guidance on the matter if appropriate: this would then be discussed as a team.
- The relevant staff member should follow this up and talk to all the individuals concerned (person being bullied/ bully}, agree actions and follow them through. All details should be recorded.
- Employers, mentors and parents should be involved as appropriate and with the full agreement of the individual concerned.
- Specific actions by bully/ bullies (e.g. violence, theft etc.) may have to go through The Opportunity Group's disciplinary procedures and compliance where appropriate.
- If a learner has suffered any form of harassment or bullying, he or she should be fully supported by the relevant staff member until the situation has been brought to a satisfactory result and fully resolved.

Incident Reporting Procedure

If your concerns relate to the behaviour of a member of staff, contact should be made with the Human Resources Department so that a decision can be taken on whether additional HR procedures should be followed.

Monitoring review

This policy will be monitored by the Quality and Compliance department and the HR Manager at least annually.